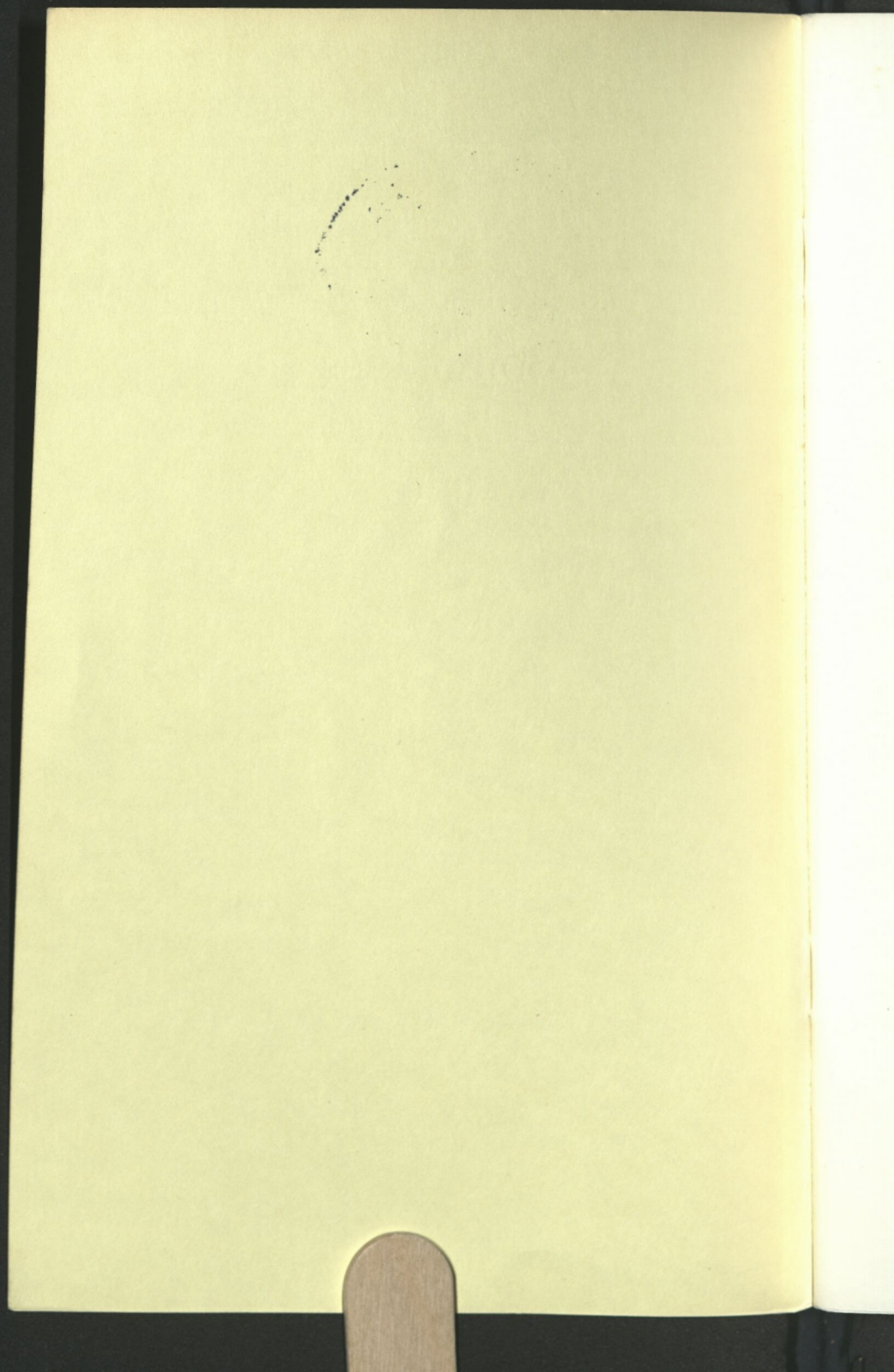


Boundless

Isle







Poems Of Nantucket Island

by

Elizabeth Tyrell

Printed at the

Nantucket Island, Massachusetts







# Boundless Isle

Poems Of Nantucket Island

by

Elizabeth Twyeffort

Poets Corner Press

Nantucket Island, Massachusetts

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Elizabeth Twyeffort

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Poets Corner Press

Nantucket Island, Massachusetts

Dedication

To

MADELINE MASON

Poet

who encourages every expression of beauty



Dedication

1901

MADEIRA MASON

MADEIRA MASON

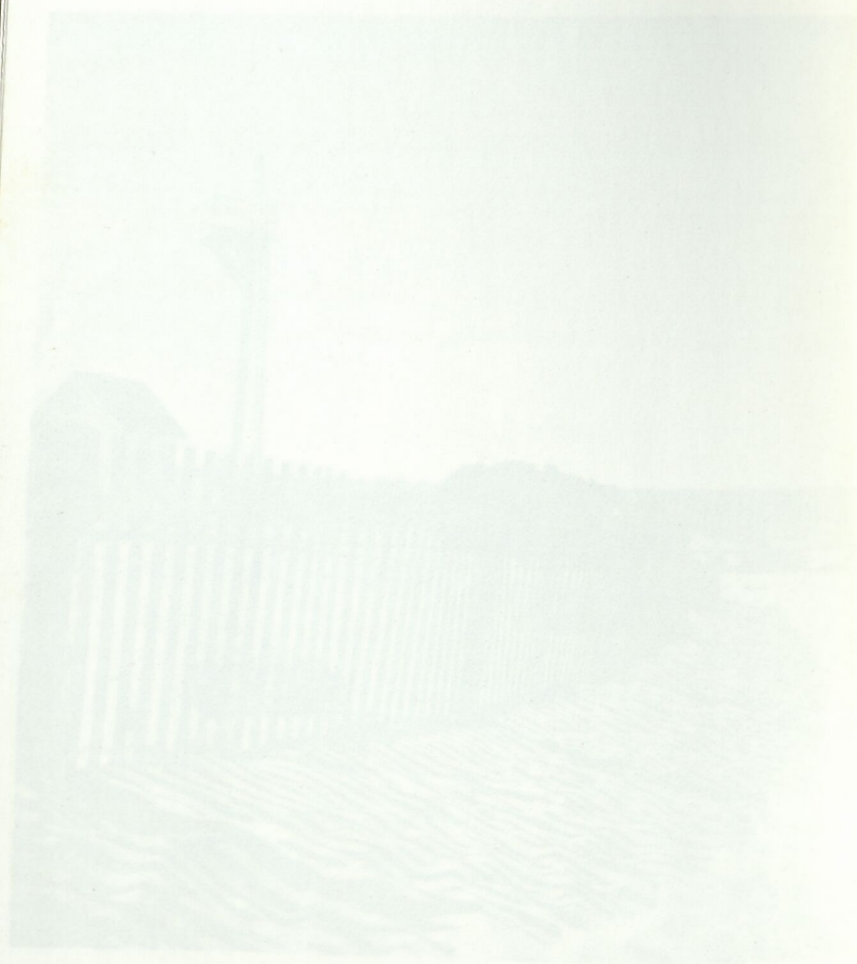
who encourages every expression of beauty

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## TUNED TO TIME

What proof have we  
    That heaven's own plan  
Will yet deny us  
    Life on earth,  
Lost in the sky  
    Like scoop of wind,  
Or cup of darkness  
    Overturned?  
New stars in orbit  
    Vie with earth—  
Asteroids, comets  
    Tuned to time.  
Flashes of wisdom,  
    Sparks of joy,  
Meteor showers  
    Tracing space.  
When darkening moon  
    To sun gives way,  
Our own reply  
    Comes back to earth.

## WINTER WITCH

Winter is a witch  
Stitching patches of dried grass  
To the stream's edges,  
Aimlessly twisting dried ropes  
Of wisteria vines in the wind,  
Like a mindless old woman  
Entangled in skeins of dun-colored thread.

Winter is a witch  
Creeping through oak trees,  
Holding branches of dead leaves  
Against her head;  
And looking into the frozen pond below,  
Remembering a girl with a bouquet  
Peering at her reflection in still water.

## SUSPENSE

I grieve for ghostly bough  
    half-peeled, half hung,  
Its greening bark unsealed,  
    its sap downflung;  
For bloom's corrupted grace  
    now broken-stemmed,  
Still held by leafy case,  
    in prime condemned.  
When leaves reflect bright light  
    like edge of blade,  
Or crumpled foil in sun  
    that shatters shade,  
Impossible to trace—  
    the dark, the gleam—  
The mystery of the void  
    lies in between.



## PILLOWS

They drown the sound of sobbing.  
They make a safe place for a baby's wobbling head.  
They keep shoulders warm in bed against the cold.  
They fit into the small of a tired back.

And

They make old people happy,  
When they pat them softly back into shape,  
As though they were rearranging their lost dreams.

## SHORE GULLS

Keeling, mewing,  
Gulls renewing  
Habitats by summer seas.  
Weaving, bobbling,  
Voices squabbling  
Over every fish they seize.  
Feathers fluffing  
In their bluffing,  
Sea birds sit like marble frieze.  
Waiting, rising,  
Fish surprising,  
Swoop on clams  
They start to tease:  
Dropping, cracking,  
Then retracting  
Salty morsels  
From the seas.

## IMPUDENT FOG

Impudent fog,  
    Filtering fine dew  
Down springy beach grasses,  
    Impersonates rain.  
Smudge on the sky—  
    No clouds, but one cloud.  
The wilting wet wind  
    Low-keening in misery,  
Doubting its wisdom,  
    Pillows its head  
On beach plum and broom.  
    Long overdue,  
The dune-colored sun  
    Punctures the gloom.  
The fog's residue  
    Quickly amasses,  
And skirting the water  
    Sways in bravado  
When the sun passes.  
    Impudent fog.

## ABANDONED HOUSE

Abandoned small house,  
Chimney at an angle,  
Stands like an old roue  
Saluting morning sun.  
Doors slammed on anger:  
Empty windows  
Empty hours.  
The summer sun  
Walks slowly around it  
Like a prospective buyer.



THE OCEAN  
AT LOW TIDE

Marbled waves weakened  
In bounding and breaking,  
Crossing with currents,  
Receding with tide.  
Small ripples nudging  
Their thin foamy edges  
On short sandy ridges,  
Spreading out wide—  
Lily pad circles  
Merging and melding,  
Return in slow motion,  
To ocean allied.

## PRINTLESS PLACE

The stairs look down—  
Blank glare—  
Where light fights light  
On edge of step  
No shadow grown.  
Still printless place—  
This step and that.  
And at the last,  
Old weathered mat.

SUMMER  
IS AN ANIMAL

This is its heated,  
Humid breath  
When done with chase;  
Lying in heaviness,  
Dead weighted paws;  
Gnawing at edges  
Of shadow-cool patterns,  
Nibbling the shade.

## EQUINOCTIAL STORM

Ogre of equinoctial wind  
Strapped to the headland,  
Fattening on field dust,  
Frothing with salt foam,  
Flattening spear grasses.



WILLOW TREE  
IN THE WIND

The wind cool  
With suppressed rain,  
Throws an invisible sein  
Over the willow tree,  
Swaying with motion  
Of ocean swells  
Rising and falling,  
Its silver leaves flashing  
Like fish thrashing  
In a heaving sea.

## MORNING STAR

The morning star glows fainter  
Above the riding lights  
Of bare schooner masts,  
Until it disappears  
As though outcast  
By a handful of wind.  
The hours of night draw in  
Remaining clouds of darkness  
In silence, receding fast  
With finger tips to lips,  
Like a thought's whisper.

## THERE IS NO SCALE

There is no scale to weigh a cloud,  
A giant thunderhead,  
Or weigh the shadow of a fish  
Above a coral bed.  
There is no scale to hold a wave,  
Majestic, curved with spray,  
Or one to hold a rainbow arch  
In colorful display.  
There is no scale to weigh my dreams.  
Enough that You are there  
To weigh the balance of my soul  
When I kneel down in prayer.

## THE FUSSY SKY

The night sky was too fussy  
About the shape of tomorrow's clouds.  
Then fog breathed on it,  
And the wind gave it a clean polish.  
Today is cloudless.  
Not even a single bird  
Makes a track across it.



## THE BLOW FISH

I know, dear Lord,  
That you use fish  
As your sacred symbol.  
But why not me?  
Am I such a freak  
When I protect myself  
By blowing into a balloon?  
I make humans laugh—  
But in derision.  
They toss me back  
Into the water, unwanted.  
You taught me this trick.  
Use me too, dear Lord.  
That I may see you smile.

## THE WEATHER VANE

Yesterday the wind worried it like a cat  
cornering a small animal.

Today in the quiet air it quivers slightly  
like a child choosing between two wishes.

Tomorrow it will stand on point: a  
hunting dog beside its master.

## CROWS

The caustic, cold cawing  
And croaking of crows,  
Swinging in safety  
In sentinel rows,  
On wobbling wires  
Held fast by their toes,  
Blinking and thinking,  
Wings wrapped on their woes.

Then streaming, close gleaning  
The fields of their yield;  
Stripping and sipping  
With cries that congeal  
The heightening, ripening  
Corn in the field,  
Merry from berries  
That farmers would shield.

Then trying high-flying,  
Escaping to clouds;  
Descending, unending  
In withering crowds;  
Not mournful, but scornful,  
Inordinately proud,  
When back on their perches  
Complaining out loud.

## MINSTREL WIND

The wedding of the minstrel wind  
Takes place upon my hill,  
And oh, the wastrel pipes that blow  
Howl by my window sill.  
I cannot see their wedding ring,  
Nor share their feast of cake,  
I only know the guests they bring  
Include me by mistake.  
I see them marching through the grass,  
Watch trees where they are wed;  
I hear the marriage vows they pass;  
I know when bowed their heads.  
But oh, their nuptial days are wild!  
They romp beneath the eaves,  
And cast themselves down chimney flue  
And scatter ash like leaves.  
They creep beneath my lonely bed.  
They shake it! All my house!  
I wish that they were single still—  
No boisterous bride and spouse.



## RABBITS

Last year's brown rabbits

Have numberless cousins

Whose habits

Bred rabbits

In dozens!

## POCKETS FOR RAIN

Unbudded branch

Unleafed, untwigged,

A hollow stump

Thick mossy wigged.

Its roots splayed toes,

Its bark coat torn,

Once wind sang here—

Now voice still-born.

Lost crest of stars,

Lost drape of snow;

Unnested bough,

No clouds in tow.

Wind's cache for rain

In hollow space,

How many stars

Would fill this space?

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UPTURNED  
ROW BOAT

Upturned row boat  
In chin whiskers of grass.  
Blistered paint blotches  
Like peeled sunburn;  
An old empty shell  
Longing for marsh tides  
Like a beached turtle.

## DUTCHMAN'S BRITCHES

When flailing rain and foggy sky give way  
To clearing light, and watery sun's weak ray,  
They say: "Enough of sky that's clear and blue  
To make a Dutchman's britches now, shines through."  
But what if night be cleared of storm and rain?  
I never hear appropriate refrain.  
Yet when the clouds draw back, and stars are bright,  
Someone should say: "In clearing skies tonight,  
A buttonhole in clouds shows that gold moon  
Holds Dutchman's britches up with bright doubloon

## AFTER THE STORM

Drift wood derelicts abandoned

by a stormy sea—

Branches tampered with, twisted

by hurricane gales.

Abandoned beach shack

shorn of shingles,

Shutters hanging on rusty hinges,

sagging like atrophied muscles.

Dirty foam bubbles bursting

on wet sand.

Largess of poverty—

scattered bones of fish skeletons.

A handful of foggy wind

thrown in one's face.

Empty beach—empty heart.

## AUGUST MOON

The birds cannot unsing, unfly  
the meadow field,  
When culminates in late July  
the harvest yield.

From bank of night a golden coin—  
mint proof full moon—  
Pays back its debt for cost of seed  
it bought in June.

The birds cannot ungrow, unwing  
soft down as pawn.  
(Forecast October brings—  
ice at dawn.)

Dried leaves, crimp edged, depart in grief  
and float wind stream,  
When lazy shadows slink towards south  
to lie and dream.

My heart like bird cannot unwish,  
unscheme, unbeat.  
My love for you is still unsung,  
still incomplete.



## HOW CAN I TOUCH YOU?

How can I touch you?  
With finger tips so light  
That frost would not be marred  
By my own prints,  
Or drops of water break  
in smaller drops?  
Or breath be hindered  
In its flow by being near?

A shadow caught  
Between my finger tips  
I'd give to you.  
And song of bird  
Pour lightly in your palm.  
Would there be notes  
All sprinkled on your hand,  
Your fingers smudged  
Delightfully with song?

Blending the rainbow's end  
With moonbeam arc,  
I'd place a chaplet  
On your hair  
By day, by night.  
And soft as butterfly  
With folding wings  
Be amulet  
For your delight.

## GIFT OF HOURS

Go, aim your golden moment's arrows.  
Let untamed sorrows, felled, to earth be pinned.  
Heed now revealed the ripened fields  
In fibrillation—  
Time marks its contrapuntal score  
By beat of wind.

Upon the tideless prairie-oceans—  
Those shores of undulating grass—  
Float out unsolveable emotions  
That leave us wonder-filled and free  
Before we pass.

Ground not sweet thoughts in rhapsody upsoaring,  
The talents of the fields are seeds in flight  
That rise to skies like fledgling birds adorning  
With palpitating wings  
Heights out of sight.

Abuse not adoration's powers—  
The innocence of love is natural pose—  
Exultant raise the glass  
To gift of hours,  
When radiance fills the heart  
Like dew in rose.

